

A
VINDICATION
OF THE
Thanksgiving-Sermon
OF THE
Reverend Dr. *WILLIS*,
Dean of *LINCOLN*;

From the Reflections of a late Pamphlet; Entitled
a Review of the Case of *Ephraim* and *Judab*;
and its Application to the Church of *England*
and the Dissenters.

By Joseph Williamson, A. B. *Presbyter* of the
Church of *England*.

L O N D O N,
Printed and Sold by *John Nott*, near *Stationers-Hall*, 1705.

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Dean of COLN;



From the Reflections of a late Pamphlet; Entitled
A Review of the Case of Episcopacy and Fealty;
and its Application to the Church of England
and the Bishops.

By Joseph Williamson, A. B. President of the
University of England.

LONDON

Printed and Sold by J. D. New, near St. Dunstons, West, 1795.

(1)
A Vindication of Dr. Willis's Thanksgiving Sermon, &c.

SIR,

AS your Design in recommending religious Union, was truly worthy of a wise Man, and a good Christian; and should it take effect, (twich all good Men wish and pray it might) would compleat the Happiness of these Kingdoms, make the Church flourishing, and restore Firmness and Stability to the State: It must needs affect all true Lovers of their Church and Country, to see Men, blinded by Prejudice, or byass'd by Interest, endeavour to defeat your great and glorious Aims of uniting our Breeces, too wide alais already, and of too long standing; and of closing the gaping Wounds of this Church and Nation, which have often overflown in a literal sense with Blood. The effectual way of doing this they well knew, was, the traducing your Sermon as nothing, or at the best, little to the purpose; as pressing a thing impracticable, or supposing it practicable, yet no way necessary to the Happiness of these Nations. And this is the way (very bold and uncommon indeed) which a certain Person has taken: Which Justice to Truth, and a desire of rendring your Discourse as serviceable to the Publick, as you intended it should be, have put me upon examining. First then he asserts, *That the Parallel between the Church of England and the Dissenters, and Judah, and Ephraim, is not very proper because their Cases are very different.*

In Answer to which I observe, 1st. That if it was his meaning no Parallels were to be us'd in Cases not exactly the same, he is inconsistent with himself; in his seventh Page he asserts, *that Parallels are like Metaphors of uncertain Signification and doubtful Proof, because they are seldom drawn fairly,*

and 'tis hard sometimes to know how far an Author would have them extend. By which words he intimates, that it is usual for Authors to draw Parallels with great latitude, which makes it difficult to know how far an Author would have them extend. And should he dislike this common use of Parallels, he must blame the Apostle for running frequent Parallels between the Jewish and Christian Worship, between our Sacrifices and theirs, and between Christ and Moses, which differ in more points than they agree in. 2dly. He must therefore grant, that, such Cases which are alike in some though not in all points, may bear a Parallel, and that to use one in such matters is proper, if the Author does not extend it further than exact Truth will allow of. And this is the very Case under Dispute. The Ten Tribes had separated from the Worship of God, which by divine Appointment was confin'd to the Temple, and set up opposite Altars. The Dissenters have separated from the National Church, of which they were Members, though she enjoin'd no sinful terms of Communion, have built Conventicles, erected opposite Altars, and chosen new Teachers in contempt of Laws Divine and Humane. Thus far the Cases of both are like, and may justify a Parallel extended no farther. And 'tis manifest the Dean only runs the Parallel thus far, by his speaking of our Separatists, as bare Dissenters from our Communion without the imputation of Idolatry, by his pressing them to return into the bosom off the Church; and not once exhorting them to leave of any idolatrous Practices, which, supposing he had thought them Idolaters, as Ephraim was, he must needs have done. Well, but this Author objects, *that this Parallel is not proper, because it is liable to an uncharitable Application,* Page the 5th.

His meaning is as he sets it down more plainly in the 6th Page, *that some may from hence infer, that the religious Assemblies of the Dissenters are like the Groves and High Places unlawful.* To this I answer, 1st, If he means simply unlawful, by reason of a groundless Separation from the Church, every one must needs make such an Application from the Pa-

Parallel drawn by the Dean, by which he intended that, if any thing. But if it was his meaning, which from his words I but now cited seems to be his sense, that some might esteem their Conventicles idolatrous, by reason of the Parellel, this is said by him without reason. For 1st there is no danger, that any one should think their Conventicles, in which no Idols are plac'd, were the same as the Groves and High Places, where Idols were set up; this is such a gross Inference, as neither Ignorance nor Prejudice could make. It is his own Observation in his 8th Page, *That the most prejudic'd Churchman never retorted the Accusation of Idolatry upon the Dissenters*: And if Prejudice did not do it, they are I had almost said infallibly secure against such a random Imputation. But 2dly, the Dean, though this Writer takes no notice of it, had carefully obviated so gross an Application, by his saying *the Parallel was not in all respects exact*: Which limitation was questionless design'd by him in favour of the Dissenters, who though they were upon the same footing with Ephraim, as to the matter of bare Separation, were not concerned in the case of his Idolatry, which was his worst crime. In short, the most scrupulous and cautious Dissenter need not fear that any Churchman should charge him with setting up Calves, in order to pay them divine Worship, which was Ephraim's deepest Sin; the Application is too gross to challenge a Page to prevent it. I am apt to think it was not the fear of such a charge upon the Dissenters, but an entire dislike of the Parallel, which made this Author press so hard upon the Dean in this point; He would not have had the Dean have intimated the unlawfulness of their Meetings in so plain a manner; all forsooth must be high-flying Churchmen, who tell them their Sin, though in the humblest manner, and with the greatest tenderness imaginable. This Character he fixes upon the Dean by a disguised Insinuation in his 4th Page, where he brings in such, *who damn all Moderation for Hypocrisie, as fond of some Pages wherein they fancy, says this Writer, you speak like themselves*. And then follows this artful Insinuation. *And indeed whether they can make*

that appear or not. Which Expressions show, he was doubtful, to say the least, whether the Dean spake like them or not. But I think I may let this Author know in the name of my Brethren, the Clergy, that if declaring the Sins of any People in soft Expressions, and with all the arts of obliging Address, which is one part, and a very solemn one, of God's charge to his Ministers be High flying, every godly Minister will choose to be a High-Churchman, in that sense of the word. And the Dean, I believe will esteem it an Honour to be found in the Number of such, who though they make no use of bitter Invectives, or of biting Satyr against any sort of Men: Yet dare not smooth their Sins over with saying Peace, when they know not the ways of Peace.

The next thing which this Author blames the Dean for, is his Application of the Parallel in these words. *The first Duty they owe both to God and their Brethren, in order to make up the Breach between them, is to leave off their Separation, to go no more to their Groves and High Places, but to resort to the Temple.*

From which Passage he observes these particulars, which he asserts, *It will be difficult to prove, pag. 6. 1st. That it is as much the Duty of all Christians in England to join in the National Church, as if there was an unquestion'd Command of God for it, and St. Paul's like the Temple was the only place for his worship.* In answer to which I observe, 1st. *That Christians are commanded to walk by the same Rule: To preserve the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace. To mark them who cause Divisions among them, and to avoid them.* And the Unity of the first Christian Church is describ'd thus, *they continued in the Apostles Doctrine and Fellowship, and in Breaking of Bread, and in Prayers.* And Christians are set forth, as making one Body by a Communion in the Ordinances of Christ. *We being many are one Bread and one Body; for we are all Partakers of that one Bread.* From whence we may observe, that the Unity of the Church consists not barely in maintaining the Doctrine of the Apostles, but also in joining in Communion with the Governours of the Church, in meet-

meeting together at the Lord's Table, and in joining in the publick Prayers. And consequently the not preserving inviolate this Unity, supposing it may be done without Sin, is in truth a making a Breach in the Church in this Apostolick Notion of it. Upon this view of the Church we shall cease to wonder the Apostles branded such as *sensual, having not the Spirit* who separated from the Churches planted and govern'd by the Apostles, and violated the Unity and Peace of the Church. And by a parity of Reason the breaking the Unity of the National Church, supposing the terms of her Communion to be lawful, which are granted by the generality of the Dissenters to be so, is altogether as criminal as the violating the Unity of the Churches at *Jerusalem, Antioch, or at Corinth* was.

These Passages prove undeniably, that it is the Duty of Christians to preserve the Unity of the Churches where they live, and make the Violation of its Peace and Unity, (supposing its Communion clogg'd with no sinful terms) highly criminal. And if these places have not the force of a plain Command, we will be contented to give them up, when this Writer shall produce any Command, equally clear, to justify the breaking the Unity, and disturbing the peaceable State of National Churches, whose terms of Communion are confessedly lawful.

As for his making the National Church and *St. Paul's* to stand for the same thing, it is as inconsistent with Truth and good Reasoning, as the asserting one Conventicle to be all the Conventicles in the Land, or one Court of Justice to be all the Courts of Justice in the Nation. And therefore he is very much in the right, when he affirms, *it will be hard*. I shall take the Liberty to add exceeding, *hard to prove* it the Duty of all Christians in *England* to join in the National Church, meaning by it *St. Paul's*: This is a shameful Shift, and argues want of Ingenuity and common honesty in the Author. What I shall say to it shall be only this. That I have already proved it to be a Sin to violate the Unity, and disturb the Peace of the National Church, as it signifies all the places
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all the Places of divine Worship in the Nation. And if this does not satisfy him, I promise to prove it the Duty of all Christians in *England* to meet at the Cathedral of *St. Paul's*, for the exercise of devotional Acts: When he shall make it appear by undeniable Reason, that all Dissenters ought to worship at one single Conventicle only.

But perhaps he will reply, that this saying of the Dean, that *Ephraim*, meaning the Dissenters, *ought to resort to the Temple*; gave birth to this (extravagant) Speculation. I answer, that the Parallel requir'd it of the Dean to put the word *Temple* in the place of the National Church, and he had not done Justice to it, if he had not expressed himself as he did. But there seems to be another far more likely reason of this Writer's Remark; namely this, his Envy and Anger; that the Queen and Nobility put up their publick Thanksgivings to God in that famous Cathedral, and not in one of their Conventicles. The other particular drawn from the Dean's Application, which this Author says, *it will be hard to prove*, is this. *That the religious Assemblies of the Dissenters, are like the Groves and High Places unlawful.* In answer to which I observe, first, if his meaning was simply, tho' not equally unlawful: I made that good by my former Assertion, namely that it is a Sin to violate the Unity of the Church, supposing her Communion to be lawful, which is the very case of the Dissenters. 2dly, But if by *unlawful*, this Writer meant equally sinful; as the idolatrous Assemblies of *Ephraim*: The Answer is ready. That the Dean never intended so much, his mentioning *the Groves and High Places*, being only a Continuation of his Parallel. And consequently it does not lie upon us to prove this particular, taken in this Sense. His next popular Insinuation which I shall take notice of is this in his 7th Page. *The terms of Cathedral worship differ from those us'd in our ordinary Parish Churches, without breeding Disorder, or disobeying any Command. The Forms of Dissenters differ from both.* By which he would falsely insinuate, that the Difference between the Church and Dissenters is of the same Nature, as those Differences between particular Churches in this Nation.

Which

Which Assertion, I heartily wish, he could have made good; for then he would have prov'd all the Dissenters to be true Members of the National Church. But this he was sensible he could not do; and for that reason wisely contents himself with barely saying so, without so much as offering to prove it. To this I answer first, That those Differences in our National Churches do not interfere or break in upon the Acts of Uniformity. They are only some particular Habits of dignified Clergymen, which are provided for by a Canon or a different way of singing the Psalms allowed of in the first Establishment of the Liturgy of the Reformation, under *Edward VI.* and provided for by the Rubrick of the Common-Prayer-Book. These, as he has well remark'd, breed no Disorder, nor break in upon any Command, and the reason is plain, because they are contrary to no humane or divine Law. But this I fear is not the case of those Differences between the Church and Dissenters. For they reject at once the Common-Prayer-Book, and all the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church; tho' the use of them is enjoyn'd by Ecclesiastical and Civil Laws. They have set up Meeting-Houses in opposition to the establish'd Church, as if they never design'd to return, and do all they can to seduce others who are perswaded of the Lawfulness and edifying Worship of the Church, by that vain, tho' popular Pretence, of greater Edification.

They have taken to themselves Teachers, to the exclusion of their authoriz'd Pastors, and are continually sounding the Trumpet of Schism, to the Meetings, O English Christians. These are the Differences, which this Author with a singular Modesty would perswade the World are only such, as are found between the Cathedrals and Parish Churches; sure he might have said with as good a Grace, there is no difference between the Church and the Separatists. But that he was sensible, would have disobligh'd a strong Party, who glory in their unreasonable Separation, and was too well known to the Populace to be assented to on the single score of a confident Assertion. This Author having taken that for granted which is apparently false; namely, that the Differences between the Church

Church and Dissenters are trifling, proceeds to justify them by a pretended reason, *which the Church of England, he says, gives for her Institution, Page 7. Namely, that the circumstances of Modes and Discipline not being fix'd by our Saviour, were left to be agreed upon by the Prudence of his Followers, according as the Necessity of things requir'd, of which necessarily he makes all Judges, and all Determiners of this Discipline too, or else he said nothing to the purpose. He has not noted where these words are to be found. And I freely own I have searched for them, but have not been able to find them. But though the Church of England indulges a free, and the very best exercise of Reason to all Persons, yet she confines the Appointment of external order to authoriz'd Governours only. In that part of the Preface to the Common Prayer, which relates to her Ceremonies, which I heartily wish all Dissenters would read carefully over, she sets down those words of the Apostle, *let all things be done among you in a seemly and decent Order.* On which words she thus comments. *The appointment of which order pertaineth not to private Men? Therefore no Man ought to take in hand, or presume to appoint, or alter any common or publick Order in Christ's Church, except he be lawfully call'd and authoriz'd thereunto.* Which shews that the sense of the Church in this matter is not fairly, to use the softest word, represented by this Writer. Well, but the Toleration-Act, he fancies sufficiently justifies their Assemblies, so that upon this bottom, they are contrary to no Command or *Law divine or humane*; this is the Substance of his eighth Page. To which I answer that the Toleration-Act does not import the Establishment of their Assemblies, but only the Non-Prosecution of them upon that account, which two things are of quite different Natures. And consequently it makes them no less sinful than they were before that Act was made. The Acts of Uniformity which are humane Laws not being repeal'd by it do still oblige their Consciences. And those places of Scripture which enjoin that all things be done in a decent and seemly Order, which Order not being let down either by Christ or his Apostles, is left to be determin'd by the Prudence of
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our Governours, and to obey them who are set over us in the Lord, to be subject not only for Wrath, but for Conscience sake. And the sacred Oracles only assign this Limitation to our Obedience; we must obey God rather than Man, which supposes that it is then only lawful to disobey, when our Governours break in upon the Laws of God and of the Gospel, which you cannot prove our Governours have done; so that both divine and humane Laws are apparently against you. And therefore this Author's Assertion in his 7th Page, *that the Dissenters rejected our Discipline, being scrupulously afraid of any humane Amendments*, is not a justifiable Plea, because there is a plain and positive Duty against a bare Scruple. His next Objection lies against a Passage of the Deans in his eleventh Page. The Passage being too large to have a place given to it in this short Treatise, I shall content my self with delivering the Substance of it, which is this. That the Kingdom of Christ, like the Kingdoms of this World, has besides this Fundamental Laws, which oblige all its Members, other particular Orders suited to Time and Persons; so that he is an ill Church-Subject, who does not observe these under his Pretence, that they are not the Fundamental Laws of Christianity, as he is an ill State-Subject, who neglects certain Statutes and Customs proper to particular Bodies of Men in a Society, because they are not the Fundamental Laws of the Country in which he lives. From whence this Writer draws these two Observations by way of Query; first, *who has the power of making these Church Orders, a Bench of Bishops, or every Diocesan Bishop in his Province, or the whole Body of the Clergy represented in Convocation, or whether the Laity have any share in it.* To which I answer; That in this Nation, this Power of making Church Orders is lodg'd in the Queen, Parliament and Convocation; which sure is not a Notion so loose and general, as he insinuates the word Church is. His second Query is, *How far these Laws are Obligatory:* Which because the Dean has not expressly resolv'd, this Writer would insinuate that the Dean's Notion falls in with Mr. Hobbs's, *that in every Country that Religion is binding on the Subjects, which*

has the good fortune (be it what it will) to have the Magistrate on his side. To which I answer, that the Dean says expressly, that the Fundamental Laws of Christianity oblige all the Members of the Christian Church, and consequently it is his undoubted Sense, plain to the most prejudic'd Persons, that those particular Church Orders which he carefully distinguishes from these, do not oblige when they interfere with them. And, To give him the utmost Satisfaction in this point, The Church of England asserts in her 20th Article, to which the Dean has subscribed, That it is not lawful for the Church to ordain any thing contrary to God's Word; which Notion and Mr. Hobbs's are widely different. This Scumbling Block, which by a scandalous Insinuation he throws in the Dissenters way to the Church is of his own making. I cannot pass over his Sophistical and fallacious Review of this Case as it is stated by the Dean. His words are these, There are several Corporations in England, and all of them subject to the Statute-Law. Now it is plain a Man is free to choose which he will belong to, and the Rules and Orders of any Society, (he should have said Corporation) are not binding on those who are not Members of it. The Simile therefore (meaning that of the Deans) if it prove anything, proves this only, that he is a bad Subject of the State, who makes a disturbance in the Society; into which he enters himself: Not he who refuses to be a Member of such a particular Corporation, which can have no coercive Power to make him so. Nor he who quietly draws from it to another Corporation, with whose Customs and Orders he is better satisfied, page 11. In answer to which I observe, first, That as any Man may choose which Corporation he will reside in, without breaking in upon the Laws of his Country, because the Privileges of that Corporation are settled by Law: So which is Parallel to it, any Person may choose which Parish and Parochial Church he will live in and join with, without trespassing against any Law: Because the Orders of that particular Church are authoriz'd by those Laws which establish the Uniformity of the National Church. These Persons therefore, supposing they go no farther, are good Subjects both of the Church

Church and State. But 2dly, Should those Persons we now mention'd form themselves into Bodies, and of their own heads set up new Corporations, separating from all the old Corporations. Or, which is parallel to it, should they separate from all the particular Churches, which constitute the National Church establish'd by Law, erect Conventicles, and having itching Ears heap up to themselves Teachers in opposition to their authoriz'd Pastors, notwithstanding the terms of the National Church were lawful, which is the very case of the Dissenters: Should these Persons, consider'd in these two respects, thus violate the known Laws of the Land which have a coercive Power; every unprejudic'd Person must conclude them to be bad, very bad Subjects both of Church and State.

I'll now follow this Author in his Political Enquiries. And 1st, From these words of the Dean, *It is the best advice upon all accounts, that Ephraim would return and join with Judah in worshipping God together.* This Writer draws these Observations. First, *This is like the advising all the Men in the Nation to be of one Mind, which he cannot think the best Advice, because impracticable,* page 12. To which I answer; That all Men in the Nation should consent in the lawful use of a few indifferent Rites, is not impossible. We see the Members of the establish'd Church, which make three parts in four, supposing such a Division of the Nation, agree about the Lawfulness of those Ceremonies, though not about the like Edification of them: And sure what three Men consent in, a fourth may; however the thing is not impossible. 2dly, In the beginning of the Reformation, all sides agreed so far about the lawfulness of those Rites, as not to separate from the Church on their account, and what has been may be again. 3dly, This Author says in his 7th Page, had God settled these Matters, he should not have scrupled them. Now by supposing that God might have settled these Matters he grants, at the least, a possibility of their lawfulness, because it is impossible for God to enjoin any thing which is absolutely unlawful. And sure it is not impossible for Men

to give up a few scruples to so plain a Duty, as Obedience to Governours is.

His next Observation is this. That if this advice of the Dean was practicable, *yet it would not cure the heats of the Nation*, pag. 13. To which I answer, first, This would put an end to those Contests for Government and Superiority, which appear too visible in the Elections for Parliament-Men, and in the Debates in both Houses. There would be no struggles for or against a Bill to prevent Occasional Conformity, nor any jealousy of taking away a Toleration-Act. 2dly, Though there might still remain designing Men to keep up Animosities in the Government, there would be no great hazard to the State from such, because they would not be supported by such strong Factions, as now they are. At the most the danger would be no other than what is common to all Governments. 3dly, *Those Heats and Animosities* among the Churchmen, which this Writer takes notice of, are occasion'd by the fear of either persecuting the Dissenters, or of putting it in their Power to persecute the Church; these therefore would be entirely extinguish'd by a blessed perfect Union of both.

The next words of the Dean this Writer remarks upon, indeed the only words he discovers an entire Appropriation of, are these. *Judah and Ephraim, meaning the Church and the Dissenters, may be good Friends, and live well together, and join heartily against the common Enemy*; from whence this Author observes, *an Union is not so necessary upon a political Account*. To this I answer; first, That if Christian Love and Charity were sincerely pursu'd by both. These Considerations, *that they were Brethren, had one heavenly Father, one Faith, one Baptism, one common Saviour*, would go a great way towards the making them hearty Friends, notwithstanding their religious Differences. 2dly, But seeing the generality of neither side are such, as Christianity, if it had it's proper influence upon them, would make them; it is not to be expected they should live so lovingly and peaceably together.

ther, as they would do if they were united in one National Church. 3dly, The observing how they have liv'd together formerly, is a good rule to judge by after what manner they are likely to live together for the future, Speculation way, but this can hardly deceive us. Now it is plain the Dissenters were restless, as they are now, till they had over-turn'd the Civil Government new model'd the State again and again, and got it in their Power, and made use of that Power when they had got it, to destroy the Church, and persecute its Members. On the contrary, the Members of the Church were active, till they had recover'd their old footing, and restor'd both Church and State to their ancient Glory; and had they rested there, all had been well. But they resented their former ill treatment (as well they might) from the Dissenters, and made use of their Interest in the Government to prosecute them; only with this difference, that though they had Authority on their side, which the Dissenters had not, yet their Severities were Mercies, if compar'd with the lawless Cruelties of the Dissenters, ever since that the Church has us'd its best endeavours to maintain its ground. And the Dissenters have not been wanting in their Endeavours, to place themselves upon a level with the Church, by getting their Assemblies establish'd, or to get above it; and God knows which way things may yet turn. 4thly, Though they have sometimes join'd things heartily together, it was always (and God be thanked for it) against the common Enemy. As for the Parallel, which this Author has drawn between the Church and the Dissenters and the Royal Society, it is by no means by no means just. And consequently that Conclusion he builds upon it, *viz. That a Body of Men of different Sentiments about Religion, may be firmly united in one common Interest, and pursue it without Animosities*, page 14. is altogether precarious. For 1st, the enquiries of those Gentlemen regard such Truths, as no ways relate to Church or State. Whereas the Dissenters dispute the lawfulness of obeying Acts of Parliament, find fault with the Constitution of the Church, and besides have the fair Bait of ruling Elderships, and good Benefices to tempt

tempt them to break with the Church, and to establish their Assemblies upon its Ruins, when a fair opportunity offers, points of a very different Nature, back'd by Motives very engaging. 2dly, Those Gentlemen of the Royal Society are not at all unanimous in their political Capacities. Though most of them join with the Church, some few it is probable hold with the Dissenters, and abett their Interest. This may convince us, if they had a Power of making Laws for Church or State, their Debates would be warm, their Counsels contradictory, and their Resolutions distracted. As for the other instance of *Amsterdam*, which notwithstanding it is a place more famous than any other for variety of Religions, is as little troubled as any, with Party, Zeal, and Religious Emulation, see down in the 16th page of this Author, this is as little to purpose as the other: For 1st, If it is his meaning there are no *Heats and Anomisties* on a religious account in that place. This is contradicted by good Authorities, Bishop *Stillingfleet*, in his Book of the Unreasonableness of Separation, page 57. cites these words from *Bayly*, speaking of the Contentions of *Symson* and Mr. *Bridge* at *Rotterdam*, they are no less grievous says he, than those of *Amsterdam*, between *Ainsworth's* and *Johnson's Followers*.

And Bishop *Burnet* in his Preface to the Exposition of the 39 Articles, pag. 8. Expresses himself thus about the Differences between the Calvinists and Lutherans, who have the governing Power of *Amsterdam* in their hands. But till the Lutherans, says that Author, abate of their Rigidity in censuring the Opinions of the Calvinists, as charging God with all those blasphemous Consequences, that they think follow the Doctrine of absolute Decrees: And till the Calvinists in Holland, Switzerland and Geneva abate of theirs, in charging the others as Enemies to the Grace of God, and as guilty of those Consequences, that they think follow the Doctrine of conditionate Decrees: It is not possible to see that much wish'd for Agreement come to any good effect.

2dly, If his meaning was, that those Differences did not endanger the Government of that Province. To this I answer,

And, the apparent danger of ruining the Party which should attempt an Innovation, is the reason why no steps are made towards it. For should either Lutherans or Calvinists, who are the Magistracy there, make any Laws which bore hard on the other religious Sects, and clash'd with the general Laws of the united Provinces, they would soon be made sensible of their Mistake by the other more numerous Sects of that Province, and by the rest of the united Provinces. And if he can prove the Dissenters among us obnoxious to such severe Cheeks as these are, supposing they should engage the Government on their side, (though there is no likelyhood of their doing it at present) then, and not till then we shall have reason to believe, that the Church and Dissenters may live as peaceably together, as the various Sects planted at *Amsterdam*. 3dly, This Parallel Instance proves too much. It may as truly be urged by the Papists, as by the Dissenters: Might not they insist on the peaceable State of the various Churches at *Amsterdam*, as a plausible Reason why the Government should tolerate them, or as the Dissenters love to speak, since the Toleration Act, establish them as well as themselves.

I doubt not but the Government would tell them, as it might tell the Dissenters, your former unpeaceable Practices have convinc'd us of the Vanity of such Theories; in a word, both the Parallels of this Author make as much for the Papists, as the Dissenters; and if he will not allow them to be reasonable, when urg'd by them, I hope he will excuse us, if we think them as little for the purpose of the Dissenters. I shall have done with this Gentleman's Politicks, when I have set down these Sentiments of as strong State-heads, as his own. *Bishop Stillingfleet*, in his Book of the Unreasonableness of Separation, cites these words of the Scotch-Commissioners, page 59. They pressed, says that great Man, *Conformity in Religion, as the only means to preserve Peace, and to prevent many Divisions and Troubles; a thing very becoming the King, to promote according to the practice of the good Kings of Judah, and a thing which all sound Divines and Politicians are for.* And Mr. *Matthew Newcomen*, a Presbyterian Divine, uses those

those Expressions in a Sermon before the Parliament, Sept. 22. 1644. *Diversity of Religion disjoins and distracts the Minds of Men, and is the Seminary of perpetual Hatreds, Jealousies, Seditions and wars, if any thing in the world be; and in a little time, either a Schism in the State begets a Schism in the Church, or a Schism in the Church begets a Schism in the State. 1st. Either Religion in the Church is prejudic'd by Civil Contentions, or Church Controversies or Disputes break out into Civil wars. Men will at last take up Swords and Spears instead of Pens, and defend that by Arms, which they cannot by Arguments.*

Upon these Views it appears that the Dean's Advice is best upon all Accounts, that Ephraim, i. e. the Dissenters, would return and join with Judah, i. e. with the Church, in worshipping God together, and that when he said, *where there is a different way of worship there will be some uneasiness*, was spoken reasonably, as well as modestly by him.

As for his Historical part, the Dean being no way concern'd in it, I shall make these short Remarks upon it, as it were in passing. First then, these are his words in the 19th Page, *when the Empire turn'd Christian, the Clergy with the increase of Riches and Power, grew vicious, proud and lazy.* He might have excepted that good Father St. Athanasius, but I suppose he thought him too avow'd a Champion against the Arrians, the then Dissenters from the Church.

If this Gentleman was to write a Church History, the Characters of Clergymen would questionless be fairly represented, vicious, proud and lazy, are it seems the softest words he can give them. *They began*, says he a little lower, *with imposing new Articles of Faith, and damning and excommunicating all who could not assent to them.* As for the word *damning*, I believe it would puzzle him to find it in any Churches Decrees for above 700 Years, and as for excommunicating the Arrians, which he must mean, if he speaks consistently, all good Christians, I am perswaded, think they deserv'd it, for denying the Divinity of Christ, and if he does not think

so too, he is infamous to the last degree. As for troubling Articles of Faith, I refer him to Bishop Burnet's Introduction to his Exposition of the 39 Articles.

Another unjustifiable Observation of his upon the Clergy, is this: that they allow'd a Magistrate a Power granted to them, whether by the Laws of Nature or Christianity, viz. of judging in Controversies, and enjoining Beliefs. I refer him to Bishop Wake's Book about the Power of Princes, I do not justly remember the Title, which grew on that famous Dispute between that learned Person, and the ingenious Dean Astarbury, in which Book he asserts this Right to Princes. It is very odd, that this Writer who allows all Men to be Judges in his eighth Page, should deny this Right to Princes: Certainly Princes, as well as other Men, must found their Belief upon the evidence of their own Reason, and by consequence must give Sanctions according to their own Persuasion, but he is (indeed it is the tenet of his Party) for excluding a Prince from meddling in spiritual Matters, which in effect, is to leave a Prince no Power at all, for all things by dextrous Management (in which he is good) might be Chymically sublimated into pure Spirituals.

His next Attempt is to Canonize Wickliff, as the brave Opposer of the abominable Abuses of the Church in his time. I wish he had better consider'd his Merits before he had made a Satan of him; Fuller's Church History cited by him would have given him another Idea of the Man, but he wittingly overlook'd it. I will set down some of his erroneous Tenets, by which the World may judge of this Person, whom this Author so unduly, (and I may say unjustly) commend. First then, he holds that God could not give a Man and his Heirs right to govern by perpetual Succession, this is rare Doctrine indeed in this Government.

2dly That it is no Sacrilege to take away things conse-
 crated to Religion. 3dly That People ought not to pay
 Tythes to Immoral Parish-Priests; these two are as bad Abu-
 ses as any he could oppose. But forsooth, my Lord of Lanca-
 ster stood by this Opposer, or rather the Introducer of abo-
 minable Errors, and was so too with the Archbishop for sum-
 moning him to justify these matters before a Synod, which
 had right to take Cognizance of such things, this was a
 Crime indeed; that he briskly told him he would bring down
 the Pride of all the Prelacy in England, pag. 20. Had he but
 said he would have extirpated Prelacy, this would have
 been brisker still, and better suited to this Author's Hu-
 mour. I cannot but observe the recording such sayings as
 these, shews but too truly what the Anti-Episcopal Party
 aims at. His next saying I shall take notice of, is that with
 which he concludes his Pamphlet: For as an ingenious Wri-
 ter (meaning I suppose either Tatchin or Du Foe, both of
 themselves Rate Writers) has it, what Occasion could any Man
 take to begin a Quarrel, who himself is suffer'd quietly to en-
 joy his Opinion, and his own Opinion is this, that he ought to
 suffer others to do the same. I could wish this was the Sense
 of the Modern Dissenters, if it is, they are very much
 mended, for to oppose an ingenious Author to him but
 now cited, Dr. Cor. Burgess, an eminent Presbyterian Di-
 vine, in his Sermon before the House of Commons, Nov.
 3d 1689 express'd himself thus. This our Church was laid
 waste by the spread of Confusions, under the plausible pretence of
 not forcing Men's Consciences, and thus to pervert Men in-
 to a course of Order and Uniformity (an Uniformity-Act was
 thought no such bad thing then) it not to force the Con-
 science, but to set up God in his due place, and to bring all
 his People into the Paths of Righteousness and Life.

I shall conclude with doing this piece of Justice to the
 Dean, that if I have said any thing that is not true, mode-
 rate,

rate, and truly Christian, which I hope I have not, (for if I was sensible any thing of that nature had escap'd my Pen, I would not spare it, though never so brisk and taking with any sort of Men) the Dean is no way concern'd in it. This Discourse being written without his Knowledge, and Publish'd without his Approbation.

I am,

Mr. Dean,

Your Humble and

Dutiful Servant,

Joseph Williamson

ERRATA.

Page 1. line 18. for which Justice to Truth and a desire, read which a desire of doing Justice to Truth, and of rendering, &c. l. 19. f. have, r. bar. p. 7. l. 11. f. of the Reformation, r. in the beginning of the Reformation. p. 9. l. 3. after sake, r. oblige all Christians. l. 17. f. besides this, r. besides it's. l. 18. f. h, r. this. p. 13. l. 25. dele

FINIS.

(19)
and most brilliant, which I hope I have not lost.
I was much surprised to find that you had classed my Pen,
which I gave it, as a gift, never to be used again. This
and all (I mean) the Deed of my own knowledge, and published
without his Approbation.



I am,

Mr. Dean,

Very humble and

Devoted servant,

Joseph Williamson

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